



## In this Issue...

- Sun Safety
- Sunscreen
- Outdoor Play
- Ozone: Good or Bad

This newsletter is provided by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management for child care facilities participating in the 5-Star Environmental Recognition Program. This newsletter provides updates on environmental issues affecting children. Please feel free to use these articles in your own newsletters. We encourage you to post this in areas where parents will have access to it.

If you have any questions or comments about the information included here, please contact Karen Teliha at 800-988-7901.

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## Choose Your Cover

**1. Hide and Seek.** UV rays are strongest and most harmful during midday, so it's best to plan indoor activities then. If this is not possible, seek shade under a tree, an umbrella or a pop-up tent. Use these options to prevent sunburn, not to seek relief once it's happened



**2. Cover 'em Up.** Clothing that covers your child's skin helps protect against UV rays. Although a long-sleeved shirt and long pants with a tight weave are best, they aren't always practical. A T-shirt, long shorts or a beach cover-up are good choices, too — but it's wise to double up on protection by applying sunscreen or keeping your child in the shade when possible.



**3. Get a Hat.** Hats that shade the face, scalp, ears, and neck are easy to use and give great protection. Baseball caps are popular among kids but they don't protect their ears and neck. If your child chooses a cap, be sure to protect exposed areas with sunscreen.



**4. Shades Are Cool.** And they protect your child's eyes from UV rays, which can lead to cataracts later in life. Look for sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays as possible.

**5. Rub on Sunscreen.** Use sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and UVA/UVB protection every time your child goes outside.



# Protect the Skin They're In: Sunscreen Scoop

## Choose Your Cover



Sunscreen may be easy, but it doesn't protect your child's skin completely. Try combining sunscreen with other "Choose Your Cover" options to prevent UV damage.

Sunscreen comes in a variety of forms — lotions, sprays, wipes, or gels. Be sure to choose one made especially for kids with:

- Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher
- Both UVA and UVB protection

For most effective protection, apply sunscreen generously 30 minutes before going outdoors. And, don't forget to protect ears, noses, lips, and the tops of feet which often go unprotected.

Take sunscreen with you to reapply during the day, especially after your child swims or exercises. This applies to "waterproof" and "water resistant" products as well.

Keep in mind, sunscreen is not meant to allow your kids to spend more time in the sun than they would otherwise. Sunscreen reduces damage from UV radiation, it doesn't eliminate it.

The American Academy of Pediatrics now advises that sunscreen use on babies less than 6 months old is not harmful on small areas of a baby's skin, such as the face and back of the hands. But your baby's best defense against sunburn is avoiding the sun or staying in the shade.

### Did you know?

Hippos secrete a pink, natural sunscreen from their skin.

**WARNING: Even a few serious sunburns can increase your risk of getting skin cancer.**

## Suggested Guidelines/Policy for Outdoor Play:

1. Whenever possible, outdoor activities will be scheduled before 10 a.m. and/or after 4 p.m. (from March through October). The availability of shade will be considered when planning such activities during these time frames.
2. For all outdoor activities occurring on sunny (non-rainy) days (especially between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), children and youth will be encouraged to:
  - A. Play in shaded areas.
  - B. Wear full-length clothing that includes:
    - (1) four-inch or more wide-brimmed hats that, when worn, create a shadow that completely covers the head, face, nose, ears, and neck. (Flappy-jacks, patterned somewhat like a baseball hat with neck flaps may prove a practical alternative.)
    - (2) long-sleeved shirts and full-length pants made of tightly woven fabric that is lightweight and light colored. (This strategy applies when temperatures are reasonable.)
  - C. Wear sunglasses that protect from 100 percent of UVA & UVB (broad-spectrum). UV-protective coatings should be added to prescription glasses.
  - D. Thirty minutes before going outside, apply a SPF 15 or greater broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB), water-resistant sunscreen to exposed skin.
  - E. Use lip balm that has a SPF rating of at least 15.
3. A grounds committee (or other appointed group) will develop and implement, according to an established time table (specify), a plan to place sufficient trees and/or construct shelters that provide shade sufficient for protecting people that engage in outdoor activities occurring at \_\_\_\_\_. (Note: In most cases, the preferred location for providing shade will be along the borders of recognized play areas or sports fields. This will allow children and staff to easily access shade when they are not actively engaged in a field sport or other activities.)
4. (Specify as needed...) A parent or guardian will provide the above described (choose...) hat, full-length clothing, dark glasses, and sunscreen. Additionally, the parent or guardian will be encouraged to sign and present to \_\_\_\_\_ the Parent's/ Guardian's Permission to Apply Sunscreen to His or Her Child form (see enclosed materials) that permits agency staff to apply sunscreen to specified child(ren) as necessary.
5. Sun protection (skin cancer prevention) training and materials will be provided to staff and parents to assist in the introduction and implementation of these guidelines.
6. While on duty, staff are encouraged to practice sun safety principles/strategies to serve as good role models for children.
7. These guidelines will be communicated and reinforced to staff, students, and parents through notices, newsletters, and meetings, etc., and above all - institutional PRACTICE.





## Ozone: Good Up High, Bad Nearby

Ozone exists both in the upper and lower atmosphere and has good and bad effects depending on where it's located. In the upper atmosphere, ozone shields us from the sun's damaging rays. In the lower atmosphere, our breathing zone, it can cause health problems such as shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, and eye and nose irritation. The most affected by low-level ozone are the elderly, children, asthmatics, and persons with chronic respiratory ailments.

### What Causes Bad Ozone?

Motor vehicle exhaust and industrial emissions, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents are some of the major sources of NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC, also known as ozone precursors. Strong sunlight and hot weather cause ground-level ozone to form in harmful concentrations in the air. Many urban areas tend to have high levels of bad ozone, but other areas are also subject to high ozone levels as winds carry NO<sub>x</sub> emissions hundreds of miles away from their original sources.

Ozone concentrations can vary from year to year. Changing weather patterns (especially the number of hot, sunny days), periods of air stagnation, and other factors that contribute to ozone formation make long-term predictions difficult.

Keep children,  
especially those  
with asthma,  
inside on Ozone  
Action Days.

### What's An OAD?

Ozone Action Days (OADs) are our way of asking you to help do your share for cleaner air. Ground-level ozone is formed when Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and other airborne chemicals mix and then cook during the hot, sunny days of summer. When weather forecasts show conditions are right for the formation of high levels of ozone, IDEM and local or regional agencies issue an Ozone Action Day advisory. These advisories let you know we need your help. By making small changes in your daily routine, such as mowing after 7 p.m., carpooling, riding the bus and avoiding unnecessary automobile driving, you can make a difference and help reduce ground-level ozone in your community. The best way to learn about Ozone Action Days is to visit the IDEM Smog Watch Web site.

### What's Smog Watch?

IDEM has created Smog Watch to help citizens better understand ozone and its potential effects. You can access the Smog Watch ozone forecast by calling our special toll-free number at: (800) 631-2871 or (317) 233-2318.